



Netwatch

BY JIM CARROLL

YOUR GUIDE TO BUSINESS & ACCOUNTING ON THE INTERNET

A Mac made in heaven

In last year's June/July issue, I wrote an article ("Is Windows past its prime?") in which I contemplated switching to a Mac given my general unease with Vista, the latest version of Windows.

It didn't take me long to go for it: I bought a MacBook Pro laptop the month after and haven't looked back. And I'm about to order a high-end Mac Pro to replace my main desktop machine, which runs Windows XP. (Actually, I abandoned XP last December — I've been using the laptop as my main office machine with the help of a Mac keyboard and mouse plugged into the main desktop display.) I upgraded to Leopard, the latest version of the OS/X operating system, as soon as it came out, and my computer experience has been nothing short of fun ever since.

It certainly is a new and different world from the seemingly old clunkiness of Windows. For about \$89, I bought a copy of iLife '08, a software package that includes an elegant and easy-to-use word processor called Pages. It does a wonderful job importing and exporting Word files, and also includes a presentation program called Keynote. Since being on stage is what I do for a living, the transition to this program was particularly important to me.

I don't have a lot of graphic design capabilities, but that was easily solved once I found the folks at KeynotePro, a small organization that designs some stunning templates for use in both Pages and Keynote. I purchased one particular theme (or template), which I now use as my main speech template, as well as the layout for the various documents I provide to clients and for promotional materials.

Suddenly, with these two programs and new templates, I have a system that makes me look like I'm in the 21st century — not stuck in the last one.

The other aspects of a Mac and Leopard are, well, just cool. I've imported the 30,000 digital photos that make up my digital life, and when I'm bored on a plane or stuck in an airport, I'll spend a few minutes cleaning up a few, enhancing them and doing other magical things within iPhoto. I've also been fooling around with GarageBand

(to create music) and am busy exploring all the other software that comes with it. Next month, I plan to visit an Apple Store to learn how to use Final Cut Express and take the last big step before I can completely abandon Windows: video editing (most of which I've been doing on a Windows machine for more than a decade).

Oh, but wait — I never really have to do away with Windows because I can run it on my Mac. When I turn on my MacBook Pro, I can choose to boot into Windows using BootCamp, a feature that Apple introduced with Leopard. Nobody would ever know I was on a Mac unless they happened to spot the logo on the screen hardware.

Better yet, I can also run Windows XP when I'm using the machine as a Mac. I've installed Parallels from a company of the same name, which essentially lets me open a window running Windows within my Mac and seem-

Suddenly, I have a system that makes me look like I'm in the 21st century — not stuck in the last one

ingly run any Windows program I like. It's seriously cool, although perhaps a waste of money considering that most Windows applications now seem positively dull in comparison.

I've had no issues linking the Mac into my home/office network of about 10 PCs. The biggest problem is that my sons have taken to the Mac with a vengeance and it's hard to tear them away from it when I've got work to do. I imagine that within a few years, we'll all go the all-Mac route.

So, was it worth the leap? You bet!

Jim Carroll, FCA, is a well-known speaker, author and columnist. Reach him at jcarroll@jimcarroll.com or log on to his website at www.jimcarroll.com

ALL MAC, ALL THE TIME

Parallels www.parallels.com

Keynote Pro www.keynotepro.com/index.html